

2018 Broadband Summit

**Connecting Indiana Communities
Broadband Funding Opportunities
October 18, 2018**

**Mike Laros
Brown County Community Foundation
Brown County Broadband Taskforce**

Brown County

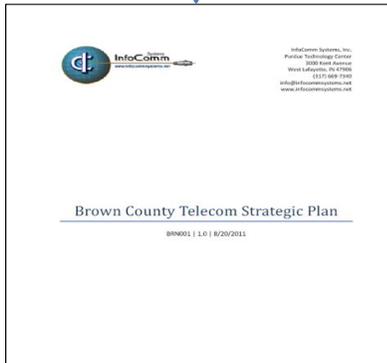
- Brown County's population is about 15k people and 6,000 households. It is highly forested, hilly, economically challenged (little industry, over ½ of the land in the county is non-tax paying gov't or non-profit owned, almost non-existent industrial base, over 50% school children families qualify for free or reduced meals).
- Nashville has around 1,000 residents and many shops and small businesses. In-town gov't and schools and some local businesses have fiber-based internet connectivity / most businesses & residential areas have DSL and some cable service.
- While there is little empirical data, connectivity availability in the areas outside of Nashville are far less than published statistical figures stating that anywhere from 55% to 87% of the county's population has access to broadband connectivity speeds of 25 mbs download and 3 mbs upload.
- This digital divide has the potential to create an academic divide and is an impediment to attracting families or businesses to the area.
- We are not alone – similar situation exists for most rural communities in Indiana.

2012 Broadband Taskforce

BC 2020: Vision for the Future
Community Report (2009)

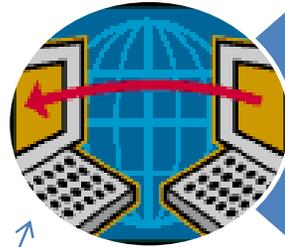


- High speed internet access should be county wide and affordable
- Universal Broadband services are necessary for all the county



2011

2012 BBTF



County-Wide, Reliable and
Affordable Broad Band
Access



Downtown Nashville "WiFi"
Hotspot



Remote Public Access
Computer Centers with Broad
Band capability to meet
interim needs of residents
that do not have or cannot
afford this service

What Happened?

No
Funding

No Real Gov't
Support

No
Meaningful
Results

2016 BC Broadband Taskforce

- A diversified group of “connected” citizens
- Focus on “Indiana Broadband Ready” Criteria to reduce regulatory barriers to entry
 - **Single Point of Contact**
 - **Procedures for electronic submission of filings**
 - **10 days to approve / disapprove permit requests**
 - **Project inspections completed in a timely and expeditious manner**
- Still Had / Have NO MONEY!



BB Taskforce

A Diversified Group of “Connected” Individuals

BC County Government - IT Specialist
Resident / Political Communications
Resident / Farm Bureau Board Member
CEO - Brown County Community Foundation
BC School District IT Specialist
BC Commissioner
BC County Redevelopment Committee Chair
Town of Nashville Manager & Economic Development
Resident / Engineer / BB Champion

Nashville and Brown County were the first communities in the state to be formally designated as “Indiana Broadband Ready”



BROADBAND READY COMMUNITIES

DESCRIPTION

The IEDC will assist in encouraging broadband development throughout Indiana by certifying communities as broadband ready.

The Broadband Ready Community certification sends a signal to the telecommunication industry that a community has taken steps to reduce barriers to broadband infrastructure investment.

While investment in broadband infrastructure is not guaranteed to follow once a community obtains the certification, reducing the regulatory hurdles that deter investment is a key step towards creating an environment ripe for broadband investment.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Any community in Indiana pursuing improved broadband access is eligible for the Broadband Ready Community certification and may apply through the IEDC.

The IEDC will certify a unit as a Broadband Ready Community if it meets the following requirements:

- Fill out the online application form, accessed via the [Broadband Center website](#).
- Upload via the online application form any supporting documentation necessary to demonstrate compliance with the eight (8) statutory requirements under IC 5-28-28.5-7 ([I.E.S. 11-01-2015](#)).

Please send questions or inquiries to:

Devin Hillsdon-Smith
Regulatory Affairs Liaison
(317) 232.8833
dhsmith@iedc.in.gov

MINIMUM STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

In order to comply with statutory requirements, a unit seeking the Broadband Ready Community certification must institute procedures that provide for:

- (1) The appointment of a single point of contact for all matters related to broadband development projects
- (2) The establishment of procedures to allow for the electronic submission of all forms, applications, and documentation required for a broadband development project
- (3) A requirement that all permit applications are approved or denied within 10 business days after they are filed
- (4) An assurance that all inspections related to a broadband project will be completed in a timely and expeditious manner

These procedures must also prohibit the unit from:

- (5) Requiring the designation of a final contractor to complete a broadband project
- (6) Imposing a fee to review an application or to issue a permit on a broadband project
- (7) Imposing a seasonal moratorium on the issuance of permits for a project
- (8) Discriminating among communications service providers

MODEL ORDINANCE/RESOLUTION

One way a unit can comply with the requirements of state law is to pass a resolution or ordinance establishing permit procedures.

The IEDC, in collaboration with the telecommunications industry and local government representatives, has created a model ordinance to assist communities in this effort. The model ordinance, found on the [Broadband Center website](#), satisfies the minimum requirements under IC 5-28-28.5-7.

What to do without money? Focus on what we could do!

- Got the local government agencies involved
 - Cleared Right of Way obstacles on county roads
 - Created a BC “Infrastructure Development Zone” to eliminate property taxes on new BB development projects
 - Coordinated project review and inspection processes
- Met with providers and encouraged development
- Expedited approval of a local fiber-based project and promoted citizen awareness of how important this development was to the community
- Looked for alternative funding sources
 - Nothing available from local government, could not make the “sustainability” criteria for Connect America Fund, no support from our LEC or CLECs for development other than in town or government agencies
 - Realized that the magnitude of investment needed was immense and all we would ever be able to do was to provide “seed” funding to encourage development
 - Created “seed money” opportunities

BC Low Income Family Broadband Assistance Program

A Collaboration of the BC Schools, BC Community Foundation & Fiber BB Providers

- Objective:** To allow as many students as possible to be able to take advantage of hi-speed internet capability regardless of family income status.
- Who:** Low income families with school aged children that meet “free and reduced-price meal program” criteria and are unable to afford access to high-speed internet options needed for BC School’s E-learning development programs. Approximately 125 to 250 families per year depending on fundraising capability.
- Leadership:** A collaboration of Brown County Community Foundation, Brown County School District, & Internet Service Providers
- How:** BCCF “Impact Grant” match money with a goal of raising a total of \$50k per year for three years to be used for “internet grants” providing \$25 of monthly internet service fee charges for qualifying families. Additional funds to be solicited from grants from local foundations (Cummins, Cook, Smithville, etc.), technology vendors that sell products and services to BC Schools, and private philanthropic sponsors.
- BC Schools to administer identification and selection of qualifying candidates using a process comparable to the existing early education-school scholarship program. Career Resource Center would administer voucher program and interactions with applying families. Internet service providers would administer payment receipt and tracking information.
- Benefits:** Students able to participate in E Learning / Schools able to lower costs through more efficient down-time programs and efficiency gains and increase attendance and enrollment resulting from county-wide internet availability. Internet Providers will increase take rates in more rural / low income sectors, hopefully allowing them to place priority on BC expansion effort. County will gain economic development benefits of county-wide internet service – through growth in home business, commercial, and residential development and resulting increase in real estate values.

Some issues that still need to be addressed...

- Objective and independently developed data regarding connectivity - (speed / quantity / reliability / affordability) used as the basis for eligibility for CAF and State funding
- Standardized pole make ready costs – transparency in costs / clear definition of deferred maintenance versus new capital / Regulatory oversight and insight on how to expedite and mitigate this barrier to development
- Right of Way easements for internet development projects off county roads – including INDOT and railroad controlled areas